

A NIGHT IN THE SIERRAS.

BY C. D. CLARK.

I was alone on the mountains, in the wild passes of the Sierras; alone and lost.

I was one of a party of explorers, sent out by the government, upon an expedition of special importance, which had been entrusted to a few determined men, who were willing to risk their lives for the love of adventure, and, in a measure, for the ample pay received for the duty. In the wild woods in Western New York, in the Canadas, and the swamps of Carolina, I was at home, and thought myself as competent to take care of number one among these difficult passes as in the places I had hunted through my boyhood; and, while the party were resting, and making their plans for the next day, I took my rifle and clambered up the rocks in search of a "Bighorn."

It was easy enough to find one; but to stalk him, and bring him in range, was another thing. After a long chase, I had driven him to the edge of a rocky plateau from which there seemed literally no chance of escape, but, when I came near and attempted to raise my rifle, the animal bounded into the gulf before him, and was gone.

I rushed up to the place where he had stood, only to see him bounding from ledge to ledge, alighting like a farther upon rocks which seemed scarcely capable of sustaining a bird. In a rage at his escape, I pulled on him while in the air, in the act of making another leap, and, much to my surprise and delight, the shot took effect, and the nimble beast went rolling down the cliff, until he brought up at the very bottom of the pass.

How to reach him was the next question. I took note of the spot where he lay, and made a circuit, searching for a place to descend. I found it all too soon; for, stepping upon a rock covered with lichens, I suddenly shot out into the air, and, went down into the pass at a more rapid rate than I had bargained for, alighting with a shock which I have not completely recovered from to this day.

For a moment I thought of earthquakes, but explosions and nitroglycerine; but as my dazed senses came back, realized more fully that, in the language of Chet Hall, I had "lighted."

Picking myself up cautiously, and satisfying myself that my bones were in order, I looked for my game. The Bighorn was lying with his head doubled under him, in such a way that I was sure the neck was broken.

As I stepped towards him there was a sudden upheaval of a great body beside him, an ugly looking head was lifted, enormous jaws gaped, and I was looking into the wicked eyes of a large grizzly, prepared to dispute the possession of that Bighorn with me!

Boys, you ought to have seen me! I gave a yell that would have made a Puma or Comanche turn pale with envy and the way I went up those rocks, on the hunt for some lonely place where I could rest and think, was a sight that would have made a pleasant spectacle for the boys to look at. I had lost all interest in Bighorn; I wouldn't have him as a present, especially since "Eph" wanted the meat himself.

And, now we are on the subject, let me say this; I have heard a heap of talk about men pitching in, single handed, and laying out a grizzly, and I have no doubt it has been done, but you may be sure of one thing—the man that does the trick, and can collect enough of his frame to move with, don't want to take the job again. Anyhow I made myself scarce in about the quickest time on record, because I did not want to distinguish myself by killing a grizzly with a bowie.

To tell the truth, and no fooling I never was so completely scared in the whole course of my life; and it hurried me a little because that bear growled and followed me up the rocks. I made the gravel fly like a hail storm; boys; it was just awful, for I thought Eph was close at my heels, and every moment I expected to feel his grip on the tail of my coat, which stuck out behind me like a board, I sailed along so fast.

But, after I had run myself out of breath, dodging in and out among the passes, I looked over my shoulder, and not seeing or hearing anything of the bear, I pulled up and took breath. It is my belief now that Eph never chased me more than ten feet, for I suppose he thought from the way I got over the rocks, that it was needless for him to think of keeping up with a fellow who could run like that.

Don't laugh, if you can help it, boys. I give my word of honor as a gentleman that it was no laughing matter to me at the time, and I never felt as relieved in my life as when I saw that bear was not in full chase. The wind was pretty well out of me by this time, and I sat down on a stone to puff, and looked around.

Where was I? As my eyes roved over the lofty crags, I could see no familiar landmark which would guide me to camp. I was lost in the mountain passes, far from my friends, for I had chased the Bighorn many miles before my bullet brought him down. It was something of an amateur, and perhaps magnified the danger, yet I feared to pass the night alone in the mountain passes.

I thought of the growling grizzly, of the Caribou, the mountain wolf, and the Indians, who had for many days been lurking about us, too cowardly to make an attack, and waiting for an attack at a straggler. Perhaps they had seen me depart and were even now laying in wait for me. I decided that this hunting alone in the mountains was utter foolishness, and that if I ever escaped with a whole skin I would take one of the guides out with me in future.

Night was coming on, and it found me wandering aimlessly to and fro, in the dark passes without finding any familiar object. I dare not fire, for if any Indians were prowling about me, I could hear in the distance the cry of wolves, and did not know at what moment they would be upon me, and no man knew better than I the danger to a single man, attacked by wolves in a solitary night.

Dark!

They were calling one another in the passes, and I could tell by the confused barking that they were, collecting in great numbers. I hurried down the pass in haste, looking for a tree, a hard thing to find in these mountain passes.

I stumbled on in the darkness, looking to the right hand and the left, in search of a tree. Behind me the confused barking of the troop came land, and I knew that a tree was my only salvation.

Looking ahead, I saw the graceful top of a pine showing over the rock, and sprang on with renewed strength, for I could hear the hungry pack turning an angle in the pass not a hundred yards behind, and when I reached the tree, a small pine, the foremost of the hideous troop was close to my heels, coming on with long leaps, furious for my blood.

I never was very good at climbing trees; but upon this particular occasion I showed an agility and grace which would have astonished you. I was pretty well out of my reach before the first wolf got to the root of the pine, but he made a leap and caught me by the boot-heel. I never cared much for that boot and I let him have it; he took a little piece of the flesh with it; but I considered that he was a generous hearted wolf for not taking the whole foot.

But my admiration for his character did prevent me from shooting him through the head as soon as I had roosted on a branch. I had left my rifle on the mountain when I slid down into the pass, but my "nave" was in its sheath at my hip, and being now thoroughly enraged, I began to blaze as fast as I could crook my finger.

In all my wanderings I have never seen such a pack of wolves as that. There seemed to be hundreds of them, beneath the tree, gnawing at the bark, howling and leaping at me. They were not Coyotes, you understand, but the big California kind, and one of which is more than a match for a man.

Moving about on the limb to get a shot at a big fellow, who was jumping up at me, the pine bow gave way, and down I went into the very midst. For an instant they yielded a little, and then came at me with gaping jaws, and furious eyes. There was no time to climb the tree, and I gave myself up for lost. Half a dozen of the fierce brutes were tearing at me, when torches suddenly flamed upon the rocks, and a dozen repeating rifles began to play upon my assailants. A pack of two hurried into their midst sent them diving back, and I was saved.—*Forbes Times.*

Loans to Royal Pretenders.

As I have communicated to you already, the ex-Emperor Eugénie has again made a loan of 12,500,000 francs—that is, she has received this sum on the promise that it will be paid back after the accession of her son to the throne. The former loans made by her circulate in secret on the Bourse. The obligations are printed on yellow paper, and have a nominal value of 100 francs, 500 francs, and 1,000 francs. After the acquittal of Paul de Cassagne this scrip rose from 10 to 20 francs. This is naturally no longer the case. The Carlist loan circulates also much at the Bourse here. Each obligation of this loan is 2,000 francs, on which 240 francs have been paid. After Don Carlos' accession to the throne, 240 francs are still to be paid on each obligation, and the bearer of it is to receive then 2,000 francs, Spanish stock, according to the quotation of the day. It must be said for the French Bonapartes and the Spanish Bourbons that they know how to turn their countries to advantage even before occupying the throne.—*Paris Cor. Cologne Gazette.*

"I thought 'twas queer he didn't hold on to the last time I hit him," said Mrs. Huse, of Alabama, to the jury who were trying her for the murder of her husband.

After waiting four years, a Michigan lover finally popped the question, and the girl answered, "Of course, I'll have you. Why, you fool you, we could be married three years ago."

A. T. Stewart once paid \$40,000 for a painting forty feet long, and ever since then he makes it a practice every night and morning of saying to himself: "Stewart you are the biggest jackass in America."

A little girl asked a minister: "Do you think my father will go to heaven?" "Why, yes, my child. Why do you ask?" "Well, because if he don't have his own way there, he won't stay long, I was thinking."

A Baltimore young woman skated herself through the ice, but as the water was only four feet deep, and she was five feet long, she stood up and informed a young man of what had happened, and he courageously passed her a board.

A bar of gold one inch square will sustain a weight of fifteen tons; a bar of silver of the same size will sustain twenty tons; a bar of copper eighteen tons; a bar of charcoal iron thirty tons; a bar of lead will only carry about four tons.

A picture in one of the illustrated papers represents the financial steward or deacon of a church going through the congregation for a collection with a conductor's bell-punch, jabbing a hole in a card whenever anybody drops in any money.

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GENERAL LAND AGENT,
Salina, - - - Kansas,

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TOWNSHIP 10 SOUTH, OF RANGE 1, WEST.

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